As a history teacher at the University of Colorado Denver, James Walsh grew frustrated with the traditional way of teaching—"lecture and discussion and taking exams and using textbooks." He wanted to bring history alive. So he did something bold. He threw away the textbooks and stopped lecture-based classes. He started using poetry, drama and music to tell the stories of oppressed and marginalized people.

Instead of taking a final exam, his students created a short play and then performed it. "We spent three weeks of the semester changing the lecture hall into a theater. It was an incredible experience seeing very quiet students take flight and become engaged and active," says Walsh.

Then James Walsh had another idea. He called former students who had acted in his classes and suggested they keep telling people's stories through drama. They started with seven performers and now have 70. It's an all-volunteer group of very diverse people. They have no budget, no director. It is a collective effort.

They are named after Rev. Oscar Romero, the archbishop of San Salvador who championed social and political justice for the people of El Salvador and who was assassinated in 1980 by CIA-backed forces. (Pope Francis recently announced Archbishop Romero’s beatification.)

The Troupe’s most popular drama has been *Which Side Are You On*. It tells the story of the American labor movement, weaving in the stories of the farm workers’ struggle, the Memphis garbage workers strike, and other labor battles. Almost 3,000 people have seen this play.

Their other dramas include: *Speak America* which focuses on immigrant rights; and *The People’s History of Colorado*, which weaves together the stories of the Japanese Internment Camps, how the Ku Klux Klan once ran the state, the violent suppression of the miner’s strike in Leadville and the struggle for gay rights in Colorado.

By making history come alive, The Romero Theater Troupe has inspired contemporary social justice activists to make their own history.